



GrowJobsCT

MANUFACTURING MAKES CT'S FUTURE

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Testimony of John Harrity
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Regarding Proposed Bill:

SB 305 – AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE “DREAM IT. DO IT.”
MANUFACTURING PIPELINE PROGRAM.

Commerce Committee
March 6, 2014

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, members of the committee: my name is John Harrity. I serve as Director of GrowJobsCT, a coalition of business, labor and community groups, along with elected officials, that focuses on the need to sustain and expand manufacturing jobs in the state of Connecticut.

I am also a member of the Dream It. Do It. Steering Committee. In addition, I serve as Co-convener of the Advanced Manufacturing Work Group of the Connecticut Employment & Training Commission, and I am also President of the Connecticut State Council of Machinists

All of which is indicative of the fact that I focus a great deal on the issue of manufacturing, manufacturing workers – and jobs.

That is why I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 305 – AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE “DREAM IT. DO IT.” MANUFACTURING PIPELINE PROGRAM.

I will be brief. There are two facts on this subject that are beyond dispute. The first is that Connecticut’s manufacturing workforce is aging, and significant numbers of workers will be moving into retirement in the next five years.

The second is that young people are not aware of the opportunities that may be available for careers in manufacturing, and many of them leave school without the basic skill sets, including job readiness, necessary to find employment in the manufacturing sector.

What we have realized is that students, parents, guidance counselors and other school officials are engaged in decisions about that student’s career path by middle school. Whether to attend a technical school or college preparatory program is one such basic, but milestone decision.

We have also realized that students, parents, guidance counselors and other school officials often have no clue as to the opportunities in manufacturing, the modern

manufacturing setting (clean, computer-guided, math-oriented, safe), or the level of compensation, which is above that of many other employment sectors.

Dream It. Do It. smartly and efficiently helps to get the word out to those students and adult decision-makers that manufacturing is a great option for a young person trying to decide "what to do."

I can tell you that Dream It. Do It. is extremely cost effective; both the staff and the volunteers get the maximum use of every dollar put into the program, and supplement that with volunteers and employer support.

If we want Connecticut to have a future that involves manufacturing, we need the next generation to be interested in and preparing for those jobs. Dream It. Do It. leads the way, not just for Connecticut but as a national model, in bringing young people to manufacturing.

The allocation contained in SB 305 is money well-spent. I urge passage of SB 305.

Thank you.

John Harrity